



# The Toni *Times*

FROM THE DESK OF  
COUNCILMEMBER TONI ATKINS

FINAL ISSUE: FALL 2008

Greetings! I hope you had a great summer.

As I approach my final weeks in office, I want to thank you for allowing me the honor of serving you these last eight years as your City Councilmember. Additionally, I'm appreciative that I was able to work with you seven years prior as an aide to former Councilmember Christine Kehoe. Our fifteen years together working to improve the quality of life for our communities has resulted in numerous successes and accomplishments.

You have been instrumental in bringing new life to our communities, so I hope you will view this last newsletter as a culmination of your work, not just mine.

When I was elected in 2000, I was able to hit the ground running in large part because of the stewardship of then Councilmember Christine Kehoe. Through her prior leadership, I had a strong foundation to pick up the reins and move forward.

During my first four years in office (2000-2004) we were able to get many community projects completed and many more underway. In 2003 and 2004, as we learned of problems on the City's financial statements and funding problems for our retirement system, the job at City Hall became much harder. Most of the focus and monetary resources went into solving the financial internal control issues, responding to the Securities and Exchange Commission and transitioning to a new form of government. We lost a Mayor and several Councilmembers in the process. It was a bleak time.

With your support and encouragement and the hard work of my staff, I stepped into the Mayor's office for five months. It was probably the most difficult time our City has faced in decades. But, we persevered and came through that time stronger in our resolve to fix our city's financial problems, complete our financial audits, right the ship and restore our image as America's Finest City.

Today, you will see that many of the projects that we initiated together are completed; however there are some that are still in progress. To keep these projects on track, my staff and I will offer continuity during the transition from our council administration to the next.

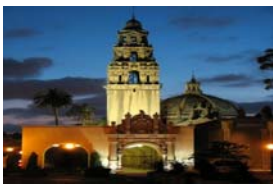
Between now and the time a new Councilmember is elected to represent you, I will prepare an extensive briefing binder on outstanding issues coming to Council for consideration; project status of district priorities already underway as well as identified funding; and a budget overview as I see it, especially as it affects our Council district.

I will make myself and staff available to the new Councilmember immediately following the November election to begin the office transition process. I want our new City Councilmember to be able to hit the ground running, too. Between now and that time I want to assure you that I and my staff will continue to focus on your calls for services. We will be at community meetings to update you and answer questions. We will continue to be on the job working for you until the last day, December 8, 2008.

I thank you for your tenacity, your commitment, your leadership in all that we've accomplished together. It has been an honor to serve you.

Sincerely,

TONI ATKINS  
Councilmember, District 3





# Balboa Park...

I have had the honor for my two terms in office to be the Councilmember for Balboa Park. In the eight years, I've had the privilege to work with stakeholders – cultural institutions, recreational groups, foundations, neighbors of the park, and my colleagues at city hall, at the state and federal levels to make it a better place. I wanted to highlight some of these accomplishments but to also note that although we have accomplished much together, there is so much more we need to do to protect and preserve this important public asset.

The last eight years have been marked by numerous projects to maintain, improve and protect the park. Park and Recreation's Park Planning Department has estimated that during my two terms, no less than 40 park improvement projects have been completed or are nearing completion—some of which I will highlight in the next few paragraphs.

Early in my first term, I worked with former Mayor Dick Murphy to revise the structure of the Balboa Park Committee, the city's recognized volunteer committee for Balboa Park. We gained City Council support to change the membership in order to provide more representation of the community, including those communities that surround the park and the cultural and recreational institutions within its boundaries. Since then, the committee has been busy providing input on a variety of land-use matters, and reviewing key land use documents and park procedures such as special events permitting. They have also been a liaison with Caltrans on matters and capital projects regarding State Route 163 that winds its way through the park.

With the help of State Senator Christine Kehoe, and former Mayor Dick Murphy, we were able to secure over \$6 million in state park bond funds that were used toward the restoration of ornamentation on the Museum of Man, Museum of Art and Casa del Prado; construction of the Veterans Memorial Garden; funding for the West Arcade construction; and a significant upgrade to the electrical system of the Spreckels Organ Pavilion.

With the help of Mayor Jerry Sanders, we were able to address deferred maintenance issue in the park that include significant roof replacements on several Balboa Park museum buildings, ADA upgrades, storm drain replacements, heating/air conditioning upgrades, and parking lot resurfacing and maintenance.

I also wish to extend my gratitude to the cultural institutions and philanthropic organizations that have invested millions of dollars into the park. These include museums that have provided significant capital improvements to their buildings and leaseholds, contributions from philanthropic groups (i.e. Balboa Park Trust, Friends of Balboa Park and

City Beautiful) that have resulted in numerous improvements to the public spaces.

We have also worked together to develop land use documents such as the Balboa Park Land Use Plan, Circulation and Parking Study, and the San Diego Zoological Society's Balboa Park Boulevard Promenade Plan Amendment.

My last year in office provided me with an opportunity to begin a public look into the future of the park and to begin a discussion on how we can become better stewards. In early 2008, I joined Mayor Jerry Sanders in front of Balboa Park's iconic Botanical Building to receive a report commissioned by three of San Diego's foundations with philanthropic roots in the park, which opens a discussion on the future governance of Balboa Park. The Mayor and I then tasked the Balboa Park Committee to engage the public in a discussion of the report and to provide a recommendation to the Mayor and City Council on the future stewardship of Balboa Park. I'm pleased to report that the Balboa Park Committee has held public biweekly meetings throughout the summer and will conclude their efforts with a written report that will be presented to the Mayor and City Council in early 2009 with their recommendations.

Also looking to the future, I was honored to be part of a kick-off by Mayor Sanders to begin the planning process for a celebration of the centennial of Balboa Park in 2015 at a workshop in early September. In the next few months, the Mayor and I will outline a proposed planning process for the celebration of the park's 100<sup>th</sup> birthday. The Mayor's office plans to bring this report to the City Council in December 2008. The next seven years will be a busy time as we prepare to celebrate 100 years of this treasure.

A special thanks to Park and Recreation Director Stacey LoMedico and her Balboa Park Administration staff, grounds maintenance staff and Park Rangers; and Captain Christopher Ball and his Central Division police officers that diligently work day in and day out to keep this park shining. Although the City continues to experience budgetary challenges every year, these dedicated park employees and police officers go the extra mile with limited resources to keep Balboa Park safe and beautiful.

Everyone continues to care deeply about the future of this regional asset and we must continue to work together to look at ways to preserve and protect the park's many diverse aspects, reclaim and create new parkland, and to ensure that we can maintain and protect this park with sustainable funding. I continue to encourage the public to remain engaged in the governance discussion. Public engagement will result in positive initiatives that will benefit our children and future generations.





# City Heights...

Established in 1924, City Heights is a large community known for its ethnic diversity, including over forty cultural groups and over one-hundred language dialects. The shops and restaurants within City Heights reflect a colorful tapestry that makes it the most diverse neighborhood in San Diego. Since 1994, City Heights has undergone significant redevelopment that has added new public facilities and public services which include schools, a library, police station, parks and community centers. I am proud to say that the renaissance continues today.

City Heights is also home to the City of San Diego's largest Redevelopment Project Area. Comprised of 1,984 acres it continues to be one of the city's true redevelopment success stories. I offer my heartfelt thanks to all who have served on the Project Area Committee, the Community Planning Groups and various neighborhood associations. Your role in the removal of blight and improving education, transportation, affordable housing, retail and office space, as well as community beautification has been instrumental and much appreciated.

This page highlights major accomplishments in City Heights during my tenure as Councilmember. A project I am extremely proud of is the Metro Center Project. It includes the Metro Villas and Metro Career Center. This project has been recognized nationally as a model for smart planning by the National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials (NAHRO). The mixed-use development provides affordable housing with job training, career counseling and educational opportunities. It offers community services and is located near jobs, public transit, parks, schools, and shopping. The development has greatly improved its surroundings by replacing aging properties with an attractive, dynamic multi-use community facility.

Socially and economically, City Heights has a higher concentration of lower income businesses and households than other areas of the City. For this reason, the location of the San Diego Workforce Partnership in City Heights

has been critical. The coordination of job training and employment programs for local residents and business owners has provided many opportunities to create a stronger, better equipped workforce—a workforce worthy of higher wages.

Other completed projects include the very first alternative fuel station in the city, a retail complex with mixed-use developments, several newly expanded and improved educational and park facilities, a new library, a new police headquarters and a gymnasium.

City Heights has always been a walkable neighborhood with many restaurants, businesses and shops near main residential pockets. It is common to see pedestrians, cyclists and scooters throughout the neighborhood and surrounding communities. For this reason, I've also made infrastructure—from streetlights to sidewalks to public safety surveillance cameras—a top priority for this community.

University Avenue, El Cajon Boulevard and Fairmount Avenue are three major thoroughfares in City Heights. Because of the presence of the University Avenue transit corridor (the busiest in the metro region), City Heights has substantial bus service connecting to Downtown as well as to the Mission Valley trolley stops. We have made great strides in maintaining critical bus service and the development of and improvements to transit stations and bus shelters.

As the Councilmember representing City Heights, I have had the pleasure of working with the community to improve the quality of life here. Over the past eight years, we've created quality affordable housing, increased and improved public safety, invested in parks and neighborhood services and stimulated economic development in the area. I applaud the residents and leaders of City Heights for all that we've been able to accomplish *together* and I am eager to see what lies ahead for this vibrant community.

**Key Accomplishments**

- Azalea Neighborhood Park expansion
- Azalea Neighborhood Park Play Area Upgrade
- Central Avenue Property Acquisition for future mini-park
- Central Police Facility
- Central School area Master Plan
- Cherokee Point Elementary School
- Cherokee Point Elementary School Joint-Use Improvements
- Cherokee Point Park
- City Heights Mini-Park Play Area
- City Heights Performance Annex: Restoration of programming.
- City Heights Pool: Restoration of operations.
- City Heights Square Senior Housing
- City Heights Urban Village Town Homes and Office Project
- Edison Elementary School Expansion
- Edison Elementary School Joint-Use Improvements
- Euclid Tower Restoration
- FaceLift Events
- Florence Griffith-Joyner Elementary School
- Home in the Heights First Time Homebuyer Assistance Program
- Housing Rehabilitation Assistance Program
- Metro Career Center
- Metro Villas
- Mid-City Community Policing and Neighborhood Prosecution
- Mid-City Crime Prevention Forums
- Mid-City Pipeline: \$25M water line along El Cajon Boulevard
- Mid-City Transit Gateways
- Park de la Cruz
- Park de la Cruz Play Area Improvements
- Pro-active Code-Enforcement
- Regional Transportation Center
- Safe Routes to School improvements at Central, Rosa Parks, Cherokee Point Elementary Schools and Wilson Middle School
- San Diego State University Community Center
- Storefront Improvement Program
- Streetscape Improvements
- Talmadge Senior Village
- Teralta History Lane
- Teralta Neighborhood Park
- Teralta Park Surveillance Project

**In Progress**

- City Heights Square La Maestra Center
- City Heights Square Office/Retail Building
- City Heights Square Pocket Park
- City Heights Street Lights Program
- Euclid/University Historic Restoration
- Florence Griffith-Joyner Elementary School Joint-Use Improvements
- Franklin Elementary School Joint-Use Improvements
- Safe Routes to School: Florence Griffith-Joyner Elementary School





# Golden Hill...

Greater Golden Hill and its South Park subdivision was first registered in 1870, with its first homes constructed in 1906. Greater Golden Hill is a charming, close-knit community with a thriving business district, including many warm and friendly establishments. It is also home to the treasured Grape Street Dog Park, an annual Old House Fair and quarterly WalkAbouts, which showcase beautifully restored Craftsman bungalows and Spanish-style homes.

The Greater Golden Hill community has undergone a dramatic change over the past eight years. Once a neighborhood burdened with empty storefronts and a rising crime rate, this tight-knit community is now a charming and safe community to live in; we can thank the residents who dedicated countless hours to improving their neighborhood for that.

I have lived in the Greater Golden Hill community for the past 8 years and remember about 10 years ago, when many of the business along 30th and Fern Streets were in need of some serious rehabilitation and revitalization. The businesses have done an exceptional job of rallying together to mold the community into a warm, welcoming and unique neighborhood that has quickly become one of the most popular communities in Council District Three to live or open a business in.

The Greater Golden Hill community has been a privilege to work with, not only because I live here, but because of all of the exciting things that have happened within our community over the past eight years. We were able to secure CDBG funding for the Greater Golden Hill Community Development Corporation, \$226,000 for a sidewalk study that included the Greater Golden Hill community, \$10,000 in CDBG funds for the creation of the Greater Golden Hill Community Garden, funding for the South Park utility box art project and \$15,000 for the improvements made by the South Park Action Council. Neighborhood streets now have community banners, new trash cans and benches throughout the business district, bike-shaped racks and most recently the addition of the beautiful mural on the west side of Fern Street, just below Juniper Street.

Last, but definitely not least, the 30th Street undergrounding project was just completed—this project was a huge undertaking. I was extremely pleased when SDG&E was finally able to remove the 90 foot metal pole on the south side of Switzer Canyon on 30th Street. All of the utility lines and poles between University Avenue and A Street have been removed.

It has truly been a pleasure living in and being able to represent the Greater Golden Hill community over the past eight years.



# Kensington...

Established in 1909, Kensington was named after one of London’s twenty-eight metropolitan boroughs, with its streets also bearing English names. Kensington is known for its well-preserved historic homes featuring a wide variety of architectural styles, including Spanish, Mission, Colonial and Craftsman homes. Kensington is also home to City-wide famed businesses, such as Kensington Video and Ken Cinema, and our current Mayor Jerry Sanders.

Active community members and community groups have worked tirelessly with City staff and my office to assist with numerous improvements that have been completed throughout the community over the past eight years.

We have been able to slurry seal Aldine Drive and secure over \$2 million of Federal Highway Block Grant Funds to design and construct a slope-stabilization wall along Aldine Drive that is scheduled to be completed in the first half of 2009. The canyon slope along Aldine Drive has deteriorated regularly with each winter’s rainfall, dropping chunks of debris onto the road and threatening the backyards of adjacent properties. The completion of the slope-stabilization wall will be a tremendous advantage for the entire community.

The Kensington/Normal Heights Library Expansion Project has been one of my main focuses throughout my tenure as Councilmember. We have been

able to secure \$10,000 for the Kensington/Normal Heights Library Fund that allowed the Friends of the Kensington/Normal Heights Library to create plans for the expansion of the library, which have been approved by the local community groups.

We were also able to secure a \$600,000 California Transportation Committee grant for the Terrace Drive Passive Park, which allowed us to landscape the park and make it a place where community members and families can congregate and enjoy their neighborhood.

At the request of active community members and groups, we have also been able to provide maintenance work for many of the alleys throughout Kensington and were able to arrange the installation of stop signs throughout the community to increase the safety of drivers and pedestrians. In addition, we were able to help with manhole cover and ring replacements, repair and installation of speed limit signs and other traffic-mitigating signs throughout the community.

Kensington is home to many community groups that have played vital roles in the preservation and development of their community. I have especially enjoyed representing the community of Kensington over the past eight years and am grateful to have had the opportunity to do so.





## Normal Heights...

Established in 1906 as “uninhabited territory”, and later paved and developed in 1913, Normal Heights has long been known for the charm of its neighborhoods, the diversity of its citizens, and the allure of Adams Avenue businesses. The wave of urban renewal that has swelled within the community is a testament to the dedication and diligence of residents who have worked with the City to ensure that improvements are kept on track.

I have been pleased to work with the residents of Normal Heights to accomplish a number of goals that the community laid out for me when I took office.

Eight years ago, the community had a critical need for additional park space. The construction of Ward Canyon Neighborhood Park on 39<sup>th</sup> Street helped to meet that need. To further meet the demand for recreational space in Normal Heights, I was able to work with the City to purchase a property adjacent to the park in order to increase the park space by an additional .25 acres, and to fund and construct the restroom facilities. Other new park facilities have been completed as well. These include the Mountain View Drive mini-park and the Kenmore Terrace mini-park.

Overall, approximately 5.0 acres of park space have been added to the Normal Heights community since 2000.

Other infrastructure projects that have been completed during my tenure include the Normal Heights sidewalk study which lays the groundwork for future sidewalk replacement, and the Adams Avenue Streetscape project which provided for the installation of new acorn lights, 7 blocks of sidewalk repair and replacement, installation of 50 new trees, over 50 streetlight globes and reflectors, 25 new tree grates and 20 new trash receptacles.

We’ve also started the ball rolling on some future projects that I hope will be realized under the leadership of the next Third District Councilmember. These include securing a parcel at the rim of Mission Valley to ensure that the public has permanent access to its remarkable views; the establishment of a Normal Heights Community Garden, and the completion of the Normal Heights Elementary Joint Use Facilities that will provide a connection between the school and Ward Canyon Park. These and other community enhancements will surely come to fruition as long as the community stays focused on its goals.



## University Heights...

University Heights is one of San Diego’s oldest communities, established in 1888, and we recently had the pleasure of celebrating its 120<sup>th</sup> birthday. In its early years, University Heights was home to ostrich farms and has since identified itself with ostrich symbols throughout the community. This community’s calendar is filled with fun activities – like the summer “Concerts in the Park” series and the annual University Heights Art Walk. These events highlight the exceptionality of the community, promote comradery between neighbors and bring people from all over San Diego to experience the unique gifts that University Heights has to offer.

Over the past eight years I’ve had the honor of participating in and observing the immense changes and improvements that have taken place in University Heights. Since 2000, the community has worked diligently with my office and City staff to complete the Shirley Ann Place Sidewalk Project, the University Avenue Streetscape project, various repairs and the addition of bollards to the Vermont Street Bridge, the sidewalk replacement project on Campus Avenue near Birney Elementary School and enhancements to Park Boulevard.

We have also been able to install a range of traffic-mitigating enhancements to the community including: the light improvement project at the intersection

of Washington and Normal Streets, the Adams Avenue Streetscape Project, additions of and modifications to existing traffic signs for clarity and safety, the installation of red curbs near alley entrances and the installation of "Keep Right" symbol signs at the existing traffic circle on Mission Cliff Drive.

Trolley Barn Park is one of University Heights’ most treasured destinations. During my time in office, we have been able to make improvements to the Trolley Barn Park Tot Lot, increase safety of park patrons by providing crosswalks and traffic signs along Adams Avenue and replace the sidewalk along the park.

We were also able to secure \$250,000 for the Normal School Building feasibility study, \$250,000 in Proposition 12 funds to Trolley Barn Park for ADA upgrades, funding Fire Station 5 upgrades, over \$700,000 for improvements to the Adams Avenue bus district and Alpha Project’s assistance with homeless outreach efforts in the neighborhood and canyons.

It has truly been an honor to represent University Heights over the past eight years.





# North Park...

Established in 1911 and named after its proximity to Balboa Park, North Park is lined with turn-of-the-century Craftsman and California Bungalows, many of which are preserved with historic districts throughout the neighborhood. North Park boasts a flourishing business district including a weekly Farmers Market, an eclectic array of restaurants, as well as independent coffee shops and a number of art galleries, thrift stores, taverns and the treasured Birch North Park Theater.

You have to admit that it has been exciting to be in North Park lately. The neighborhoods are looking better than ever, the business district is booming with arts, entertainment and exciting new restaurants, and there is even more revitalization underway. The past eight years have seen a convergence of public and private investment that has made North Park one of the most happening communities in San Diego.

The success of the revitalization is due to a partnership between the City and the community, each investing in various aspects and contributing to the makeover. While homeowners have restored the historic neighborhoods, and business owners have brought new life to the commercial areas, the City has been busy too.

Public investment brought about the restoration of the North Park Theatre which now anchors a burgeoning arts and culture district. The adjacent parking structure, also built with public funds, ensures that the district's growing popularity is not choked off by a lack of parking infrastructure. The walkability and pedestrian charm of North Park has been enhanced as well with streetscape improvements, including new sidewalks, street trees, and tree grates on University Avenue and 30<sup>th</sup> Street. Ray Street has been enhanced with new street furniture, trees, street lights and trash cans. The

Pershing Portal Project now offers a pleasing gateway into the community from Balboa Park.

Other pedestrian enhancements include landscaped medians that give the feel of an urban oasis which have been completed along El Cajon Boulevard. In the neighborhoods, an accelerated City cost sharing program prompted scores of homeowners to have crumbling sidewalks replaced adjacent to their properties.

Another major improvement to North Park has been the undergrounding of power lines along 30<sup>th</sup> Street. Do you remember how badly those wires cluttered up the urban landscape before going underground? Their removal, as part of the city's undergrounding program, has made a stunning improvement to the visual character of the community.

The quality of park space in North Park Community Park has also been improved with the construction of a customized, whimsical play area that reflects the artistic spirit of the community.

The dividends on all of these investments, both public and private, are now compounding. New renovations and public improvements are currently underway. New improvements, including development of a park behind the North Park Theatre and the Thorn Street Median, are being planned. It has truly been a community-wide makeover. In many ways we can all share in the success of this renewal. Of course the work will never be done, and constant vigilance is needed to protect what we have gained, but if you take a moment, it is very satisfying to reflect on the progress that has been made in North Park.



## RESTORATION OF THE NORTH PARK THEATRE

When I took office the mandate from North Park residents was clear: The restoration of the North Park Theatre was the lynchpin to the revitalization of North Park's commercial district. To some, the boarded-up theatre, a once proud symbol of the community's heyday, had instead become an ever-present reminder of the community's decline. To many others, though, the potential of a restored landmark signified the possibility for a revitalization of the entire community.

More than \$22 million was invested by the City's Redevelopment Agency, which collaborated with the developer, Bud Fischer, and Lyric Opera San Diego to restore the theatre and construct the 393-space parking garage. The theater also features 5,800 square feet of retail space on the

ground floor and 6,700 square feet of office space on the second floor. It re-opened in October, 2005.

There is no question that the restoration of the North Park Theatre has been a phenomenal success. It has been a catalyst for additional private investment in North Park, and now anchors a growing and thriving arts, culture and entertainment district.

While North Park has seen many positive changes over the past eight years, none have had as profound an impact as the re-emergence of the North Park Theatre. As I look back on my time in office, this is one of the projects I am most proud to have been associated with.





# Hillcrest...

In collaboration with the Hillcrest community, I am proud of the difference we have made to improve and enhance such a vibrant neighborhood. We were able to showcase the gateway to the Hillcrest community through the establishment of identification signs- a sign of our prominence as one of America’s ten great neighborhoods. It was a tremendous honor to celebrate this national recognition with the community at the Hillcrest Centennial. Hillcrest was awarded this acknowledgement in 2007 for its, “unique blend of setting, details, and residents, which has made Hillcrest a trendsetter and catalyst for change.” It is no doubt that Hillcrest deserved this honor given the character-rich residences and business that make up the social fabric and identity of Hillcrest. Preserving this unique character has always been a priority for me and as such, I was pleased to support an Interim Height Ordinance\* so that incompatible development would cease as we prepare for a long-term development plan. A special note of appreciation to the many dedicated community members that helped initiate and advance the Interim Height Ordinance along with other measures to improve neighborhood quality of life.

It has been a pleasure to work with countless dedicated community members and community based organizations. I have enjoyed working with the Hillcrest Town Council and the Hillcrest CLEAN Team to beautify the neighborhood during regular community clean-ups. In partnership with the

Hillcrest Business Improvement Association, we were able to repair sidewalks along University Avenue and create an ordinance to address abandon newsracks. I was also delighted to kick off a pedestrian safety program in conjunction with the Uptown Partnership which has resulted in the installation of seven new traffic signals with countdown times and lead indicator lights.

I was pleased to support the creation of the Hillcrest Maintenance Assessment District in 2006, to provide enhanced street sweeping, litter control, and tree trimming in central Hillcrest. Infrastructure improvements are vital to the sustainability of great neighborhoods and to maintaining quality of life enjoyed by residents. Therefore, I cannot underscore enough the importance of the numerous projects that have been completed over the years. Many of these critical infrastructure projects were made possible through the allocation of over \$2.7 million in Development Impact Fees which resulted in; generation of new park land, enhanced and additional sidewalks, First Avenue Bridge over Maple Street, design of the Mission Hills/Hillcrest Library, and numerous water and sewer pipe replacement projects.

*\*Read more about the Interim Height Ordinance on Page 8.*



# Talmadge...

Established in 1925, Talmadge was named after the three Talmadge sisters – Norma, Constance and Natalie – who were noted silent movie stars. The Talmadge Gates defined this community and have stood guard along the borders of the community since the 1920’s, before any houses were built. Talmadge is interwoven with a vast amount of finger-canyons and is one of the first communities in Southern California to receive statewide certification as a “Fire Safe Community.”

Talmadge is a very unique community that is purely residential comprised of an eclectic mix of mostly Craftsman and Spanish-Colonial homes with lantern-lined streets and manicured lawns.

Talmadge is filled with community-minded citizens who, in conjunction with my office over the past eight years, have been able to complete the Talmadge Traffic Circle at the intersection of 49<sup>th</sup> Street and Adams Avenue, install traffic calming measures along Collwood Boulevard, install a middle turn lane on Collwood Boulevard, install a bike lane on Collwood Boulevard and install all-way stop signs at the intersection of Copeland and Meade Avenues. We have also been able to secure over \$108,000 to refurbish the historic Talmadge Gates and \$18,000 in CDBG funds for three mid-block street lights on Collwood Boulevard.

The Talmadge FireSafe Council, lead by Talmadge resident Kathy Finn, was able to achieve FireWise status, create the Talmadge Community Wildfire Protection Plan and secure a \$86,000 grant to address fire hazards throughout

the community’s canyons and canyon-rimmed properties.

Another exciting topic in this neighborhood is our residential undergrounding program that began here a few years ago. In the interest of time and funds, we decided to begin in the north eastern portion of Council District Three and weave our way down, back and forth, until finishing in Greater Golden Hill. Talmadge’s first project block has been completed and the second block is well underway.

The Talmadge Maintenance Assessment District is currently working with the City and SDG&E to coordinate Talmadge’s 150 new-light installation project to run concurrently with the undergrounding, to save this community millions of dollars.

In recent years, the Talmadge Community Council has rallied together, engaged neighbors and worked closely with our Police Department to make sure crime stays out of Talmadge. Within the past year, this group has developed a nightwatch patrol group that is highly organized, has dramatically decreased crime throughout the neighborhood and is an exceptional example to other neighborhood watch groups.

Working with Talmadge over the past eight years has been an extraordinary experience because of devoted and pro-active community members – thank you!





## INTERIM HEIGHT ORDINANCE

For over twenty years, development in Uptown has been held to the same standards that were established in the 1980's, when the existing community plan was adopted. As a result, Uptown has experienced development that is out of character and scale with the existing community—a community rich in history and flavor.

It is clear that the community plan's vision must reflect the present-day needs and growth climate. In order to meet these goals and cease out-of-character development, I was pleased to advocate on behalf of the community so that an Interim Height Ordinance (IHO) could be adopted. The IHO represents a temporary measure to address the problems associated with an outdated community plan. Additionally, it sets the stage so that the community can focus on a new community plan and work toward a collective vision for the future.

It is an important time for Uptown, as we embark on a long-term planning effort that will leave an everlasting mark on one of the City's most vibrant neighborhoods. I look forward to beginning this important process with the community and I strongly encourage members of the community to get involved so that together we can shape the future of one of "America's Greatest Neighborhoods."

## PUBLIC SAFETY: A TOP PRIORITY



An evening stroll through our neighborhoods or a quick walk with our dog should be done comfortably and without fear. That is why keeping our neighborhoods safe and free from crime has been one of my top priorities throughout my tenure as Councilmember. In partnership with our police and fire departments and active community members, we have taken numerous steps to improve public safety throughout the Third District.

In my first term, I partnered with Chief Lansdowne to work with residents to reactivate Neighborhood Watch Programs and assist those in neighborhoods who were interested in starting a neighborhood watch group. Today, dozens of groups across the district continue to partner with the police department and my office to keep their neighborhoods safe.

The Retired Senior Volunteer Program (R.S.V.P) also serves the community well. In 2004, I had an opportunity to contribute \$10,000 of District Three Community Block Grant Funds to this program. RSVP volunteers give up hours of free time to help in our communities. They provide a number of services which assist the police department on a daily basis such as performing vacation house checks and helping out during special events--just to name a few.

Stonewall Citizens Patrol also plays a critical role in Public Safety. Volunteers of this group act as an extra set of eyes and ears for the police in Hillcrest, North Park, City Heights and Balboa Park. Following the brutal hate crimes that occurred during LGBT Pride in 2006, I assisted in launching the Stonewall Citizens Patrol, which was founded by the American Veterans for Equal Rights in partnership with our police department.



Despite our best efforts, a rise in criminal activity was seen during last year's summer months. So, in conjunction with the Mayor and Police Chief Lansdowne, I hosted over ten public safety meetings across the District in City Heights, Balboa Park, North Park and Normal Heights. These meetings provided residents with an opportunity to learn more about issues such as reporting suspicious activity, gang activity and nuisance properties.

It is critical that our fire and police departments have the necessary resources to do their jobs. Despite the City's fiscal challenges, I along with my Council Colleagues have worked hard to identify the funding necessary to purchase much needed equipment.

As a board member of the San Diego Authority for Freeway Emergencies (SAFE), I assisted in securing the initial funding for the first of the City's two fire helicopters.

In 2006, I was pleased to allocate \$11,000 in Federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding to our Fire Department to purchase a much needed thermal imager, which allows firefighters to see through smoke and locate fire victims. It has already been used in Mid-City to save lives and limit fire damage.

Moreover, I would like to thank our police officers and firefighters for all of their hard work and dedication to protect the residents in the Third District. I also want to thank all of the residents--your participation has been extremely important to help keep our neighborhoods safe.

## LIVING WAGE ORDINANCE

In 2005, I was proud to introduce and advocate for the Living Wage Ordinance that was ultimately adopted by the San Diego Council. Today, dedicated, hard working employees that clean and protect our public facilities, take care of our parks, work in our libraries and recreation centers, earn a more appropriate wage to better support their families. Like many other cities, it was important that San Diego establish a livable wage for workers who provide critical services that improve the quality of life in our communities.

The Living Wage Ordinance gives companies that do business with the City the option to pay their employees a minimum rate of \$10 per hour and provide health benefits or \$12 per hour without health benefits.

San Diego is a great place to live, but a very expensive place to raise a family. It isn't surprising that many San Diegans are finding it hard to make ends meet. In fact, many work two and three jobs so that they can provide basic necessities – food, clothes and healthcare.

In October 2007, the Budget and Finance Committee received the first annual report on the Living Wage Program. The report showed that employees benefited significantly from the program. Employee testimonials at the Committee hearing included security guards and cleaning staff who had earned \$8-\$9 an hour prior to the Living Wage Ordinance. The pay increases they received made it possible for them to quit second jobs, obtain health care, pay for their education, and better care for their children.

There is still some work to be done. I believe it is our obligation as a City to continue to ensure that every employer doing business with the City of San Diego pay their workers a reasonable, living wage. In July 2007, the Budget and Finance Committee heard several recommendations to strengthen enforcement of the Living Wage Ordinance. These recommendations will be brought forward to the City Council some time in the fall. I look forward to participating in this very important discussion.

The Living Wage Ordinance is a way to ensure that a worker who puts in an honest day's work receives a livable salary for their labors--this is the fair and right thing to do.

## AS CHAIR OF THE BUDGET AND FINANCE COMMITTEE...



In 2006, I was pleased to become Chair of the City's newly created Budget and Finance Committee. As part of the transition to the strong mayor form of governance, the City created the Committee to review fiscal policy and budgetary solutions.

Since that time, with the help of the Independent Budget Analyst, the Committee has vetted many important issues and accomplished several goals set forth in the beginning of the process. It was critical that we work together to implement policies and procedures to restore the City's financial health.

Among these accomplishments are:

- Implementing Charter Section 39 reporting each month as required by the City Charter in order to track City's expenditures and revenue throughout the year.
- Developed the Statement of Budgetary Principles that creates a cap on the total number of cuts that the Mayor can make in order not to affect levels of service to the citizens of San Diego.
- On-going analysis of the Mayor's Five-Year Financial Outlook plan, which lays out the cost of addressing a number of major financial obligations that have gone unmet in recent years.
- Allotted more time in the Budget process to ensure community input.
- Developed a debt policy that lays out a plan by which the City contemplates and issues debt.
- Developed a reserves policy, which helped to reinstate and improve the City's credit ratings.

There is still work to be done. However, the Budget and Finance Committee has laid the groundwork for a stronger system of council oversight of the city's financial functions. I am confident that the new Chair and the incoming Committee members have a clear framework that will help them take the necessary steps to continue to lead our City towards fiscal health while maintaining vital services our citizens expect.



A PASSION FOR QUALITY, AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Affordable and decent housing is an issue near and dear to my heart. Early in my life, I personally experienced what it is like to live in sub-standard housing. Later in college, I worked directly with a legal aid society that assisted individuals and families in overcrowded and sub-standard houses. Ever since, I have been passionate about improving the quality of life for all.

As a City Councilmember, I have served on the City’s Housing Authority and Redevelopment Agency Board. In this capacity I have witnessed an exceptional commitment on behalf of both the City Council and the Mayor not only to provide affordable housing opportunities, but also to advocate for environmentally friendly solutions to housing and redevelopment. In District Three alone, over the last eight years, we have created over 900 units affordable to low income families and persons with special needs, including HIV/AIDS. Of these 900 units, over 400 affordable units are designated for seniors. City-wide, over 10,000 units have been created that provide affordable living opportunities such as transitional housing, rental housing, and homeownership.

On August 6, 2002, I, along with my Council colleagues, declared a Housing State of Emergency in the City of San Diego. Following that action, we approved a proposal which leveraged the redevelopment Low- and Moderate-Income Housing Fund to create a \$55 million pool of secured assets to assist in developing 2,185 new affordable housing units Citywide.

In addition, the City’s success in creating affordable housing can be attributed to the passage of an Inclusionary Housing Ordinance in 2003. This law requires that residential developers set aside ten percent of their units as affordable, or pay a fee in-lieu to the Inclusionary Housing Fund – a primary source of local monies used to finance affordable housing. This ordinance has resulted in over 1,600 affordable housing units that have been built or are underway. In addition, more than \$20

million of in-lieu fees have been collected for the Inclusionary Housing Fund, which is available for investment so that additional affordable housing opportunities can be created.

To augment the Inclusionary Housing Ordinance, this past year the City adopted a density bonus program that provides zoning bonuses and deviations to builders who provide affordable housing. It is anticipated that this program will be used to assist developers in meeting inclusionary requirements on-site rather than paying in-lieu fees, thus resulting in more affordable housing production.

In addition to the local affordable housing initiatives described above, the City was also successful in securing \$67 million in state funding through the passage of Prop 46 in 2006 and \$22.5 million in the first round of Proposition 1C funding in 2008. We are delighted with our success in accessing these statewide funds and continue to work diligently to ensure we continue to receive our “fair share.”

Finally, this past year, the City of San Diego received extraordinarily news that the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development agreed to “hand over the keys” to San Diego’s public housing projects and to award the City with about 1,360 new Section 8 vouchers to be given to our public housing residents. This groundbreaking initiative will allow San Diego to properly maintain its properties, protect its residents, and leverage its real estate assets and rental revenue to build more affordable housing.

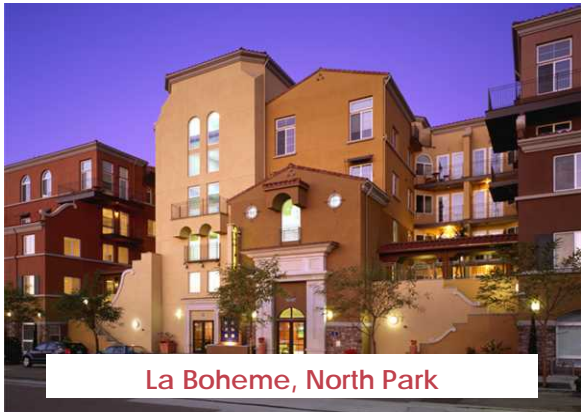
Despite all of the progress we have made toward our mission of providing an affordable home for every San Diegan, we are faced with market challenges combined with diminishing resources. Through the collaboration of strong public/private partnerships, coupled with smart planning we can continue to improve quality of life and strengthen communities.



Metro Villas, City Heights



Talmadge Senior Village



La Boheme, North Park

PROTECTING OUR CANYONS

San Diego’s system of urban canyons has long been recognized by planners and community members as one of our region’s most valuable and distinguishing features. During my time in office, I have been pleased to lend my support to numerous efforts to preserve and protect these resources.

As urban densification increases, so does citizen interest in preserving, restoring and enhancing our canyons as a link to nature and a sanctuary from the urban environment. Volunteer canyon preservation efforts have been growing steadily for a number of years. In fact, the Sierra Club’s Canyon Campaign has successfully fostered dozens of Friends of Canyons groups that seek to organize citizens around the care and protection of their local canyons. These dedicated groups regularly remove trash, weeds and other invasive plants, as well as maintain trails, plant native vegetation and provide information to the community about local canyons.

Numerous strides have been made to further protect our canyons from the threats of urban encroachment. Perhaps the most significant accomplishment was the enactment of SB 373, legislation carried last



year by Senator Christine Kehoe, which allowed the City to reclassify over 6,600 acres of public open space, including more than 600 acres of urban canyons, as *dedicated open space*. I was particularly excited about this legislation since I had sought for several years to identify city resources that would accomplish this same objective. The reclassification adds an extra layer of protection to our canyons and other open space against development.

Over the past few years, the civic discussion about how to best protect our canyons has been elevated at City Hall. Numerous hearings at the Natural Resources and Culture Committee have left little doubt that the City’s policy makers are strident in their intention to protect our canyons. In fact, language was added to the City’s General Plan reflecting this intent.

Further steps can be taken to protect and enhance our system of canyons. I have promoted the concept proposed by San Diego Civic Solutions to tie San Diego’s network of urban canyons together under a cohesive park system. This would be a much more holistic approach to managing and caring for this extraordinary resource to ensure that they can be enjoyed by future generations of San Diegans.



## PARKS MATTER

Parks teach us, inspire us, and humble us. Simply put...parks matter. They matter a great deal now and will matter even more to future generations. I've always thought that parks are important to the vibrancy of any city. They provide a natural place for beauty, the green spaces clean the air and absorb stormwater. Most importantly, parks connect city residents and visitors to nature.

For these reasons, even with a very limited annual General Fund, I've always made maintaining, preserving and developing parks a priority. I am very proud of what we've been able to accomplish in terms of parks and open space over the past eight years. Together with the Parks and Recreation Department and the various Recreation Councils, Planning Committees, Neighborhood Associations, park advocates and public/private partnerships, we've been able to continue to deliver projects and services to District Three residents.

Each year, the City's Parks and Recreation Department is forced to do "more with less". Despite the reduction of resources and staffing, our Parks Department has continued to offer educational programs, engage visitors and maintain a world-class park system. For that, I am extremely thankful. I am also thankful that you, rather than allow the chronic funding shortfalls to threaten our park system, have supported me in my annual fight (during the budget process) to restore critical service-providing positions and hours of operations to our pools and recreation centers. I must also thank Price

Charities for their commitment to our District. For several years now, they've paid to restore pool hours in City Heights to ensure that our youth have a place to go and swim year-round.

During my term, the Third District benefited greatly from two statewide bond initiatives—Propositions 12 and 40. Prop 12, passed in 2000, approved a \$2.1 billion bond measure and Prop 40, passed in 2002 approved a \$2.6 billion dollar bond measure for high priority projects that satisfy the most urgent park and recreation needs in the most economically disadvantaged areas throughout the state. This funding, along with other sources—Community Development Block Grant Funding, Development Impact Fees, Infrastructure Funding, private donations—has brought us where we are today.

Looking back, we've been able to enhance parks, recreation and the quality of life for the residents and visitors of the Third District. In eight years alone, we've added over 32 new, usable acres of green space into the City's park system and funded dozens of park improvements to provide not only common space for free play, sports, concerts, swimming, and other public events, but also sanctuaries for quiet relaxation and the preservation and enjoyment of nature. Our parks and green spaces are vital to the growth of the District and they continue to play an important role in defining our city, our communities and the individuals who live and work throughout San Diego.

### Completed Community and Neighborhood Park Projects

- Park de la Cruz Neighborhood Park
- Cherokee Point Neighborhood Park
- Teralta Neighborhood Park
- Teralta History Lane
- Azalea Neighborhood Park Play Area Improvements
- Azalea Neighborhood Park Property Acquisition
- Central Avenue Property Acquisition for Mini-Park
- City Heights Mini-Park Play Area Improvements
- Terrace Drive Mini-Park
- Ward Canyon Neighborhood Park Prefabricated Restroom
- Ward Canyon Neighborhood Park—40<sup>th</sup> Street Property Acquisition (4 Lots)
- Ward Canyon Neighborhood Park Monument Sign
- Golden Hill Community Park Play Area Improvements
- Old Trolley Barn Park Neighborhood Park Play Area Improvements
- North Park Community Park Play Area Improvements
- North Park Community Park Security Lighting
- North Park Community Park Ball Field Lighting
- North Park Community Park Craft Club ADA Upgrade & ADA Restroom Installation

### Completed Joint-Use Projects

- Cherokee Point Elementary School Joint-Use Improvements
- Edison Elementary School Joint-Use Improvements
- Garfield Elementary School Joint-Use Improvements

### Projects Under Construction

- Normal Heights Elementary School Joint-Use Improvements
- Florence Griffith Joyner Elementary School Joint-Use Improvements
- Franklin Elementary School Joint-Use Improvements

### Projects Funded by CD3/To be Constructed

- Birney Elementary School Joint-Use Improvements
- Roosevelt Middle School Joint-Use Improvements
- North Park Mini-Park and Streetscape Improvements (Behind the N. Park Theatre)
- Montclair Neighborhood Park Play Area Improvements

**PARK ACREAGE ADDED DURING COUNCILMEMBER ATKINS' TERM: 32.33 ACRES**





## MY PASSION FOR INFRASTRUCTURE

Improvements to the streets in Council District Three – where we walk and where we drive our cars has been my passion during my two terms in office as Councilmember. Working with many of you, and the community groups of the district, we have been able to accomplish a number of our priorities. I wanted to take this opportunity to highlight some of these accomplishments.

Working with my Council colleagues we have been able to make changes to City Council Policy issues to help improve our neighborhoods. We were successful in changing the trenching policy by requiring the city, as well as public utilities and private companies, to resurface our streets curb to curb following trenching in the street. We also changed the citywide street light policy to provide better lighting Citywide. In District Three, we have completed the conversion of 1,166 streetlights to the high sodium or brighter lights in the last eight years. Over 300 NEW street lights have also been installed making our streets safer to walk at night.

We also implemented a Residential Undergrounding Program ---which I consider one of our greatest successes. The City Council succeeded in getting the State Public Utilities Commission to grant increased residential undergrounding of overhead utility lines--\$36.5 million collected annually from utility customers to underground lines. We are nearing completion of our first major residential community undergrounding program in District Three in Talmadge (Block FF), and will break ground this fall for the second block project in Talmadge (Block EE) and have secured funding and started the engineering and design work on a third project (Block FF) to begin work next year. We have also completed undergrounding projects on Monroe Avenue from Winona to Collwood Boulevard, Fairmount Avenue from Thorn to Myrtle Street, and Meade Avenue from New Jersey Street to 44<sup>th</sup> Street (the largest stretch of undergrounding ever undertaken by SDGE and the City totaling almost 6 miles).

We also completed undergrounding Orange Avenue from 33<sup>rd</sup> to 34<sup>th</sup> Street in addition to the high voltage transmission line on 30<sup>th</sup> Street from University Avenue to L Street. In just Council District Three alone, undergrounding projects both completed and in design cover over 27 miles of power lines and about \$74 million in 13 separate projects. Although this seems like a substantive amount, so much more of the district needs to be completed.

After a hiatus due to the fiscal challenges in the City, I'm pleased to report that the City has resumed funding and work on critical water and sewer pipe replacement throughout the City. In 2002, we completed the Mid-City Pipeline, a \$25 million dollar project which replaced the decades-old Trojan pipeline to increase water efficiency for the entire Mid-City area. New projects to replace pipes are currently underway with others along in design.

Early in my tenure, I created a \$3.7 million Housing and Urban Development (HUD 108) Loan for Infrastructure Programs for District 3. This was the first of its kind in the City and was my bold effort to jumpstart capital improvement projects in our district. This helped expedite the funding of major streetscape and neighborhood improvement projects which otherwise may have taken years to fund and complete. I'm pleased to report that projects ranging from the Adams Avenue Streetscape

Improvement Project, Shirley Ann Place Sidewalk Project and the completion of the El Cajon Boulevard medians from Park Boulevard to Fairmount Avenue were but a few of the projects completed with this funding.

Major streetscape improvements in many of our business areas throughout the district including projects on Adams Avenue, El Cajon Boulevard, University Avenue in North Park and City Heights, and in Hillcrest brought new curbs and sidewalks, median landscaping, signage, street trees and new lights to improve the pedestrian experience, parking and traffic flow.

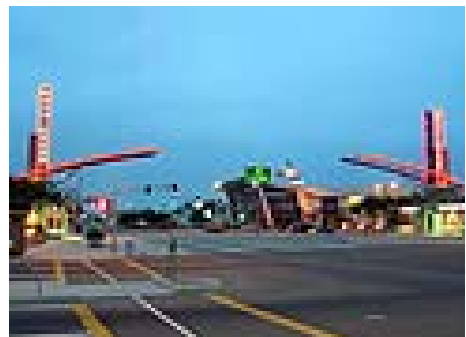
We also looked at Traffic Circulation issues. Over the past eight years, I collaborated with community groups to address traffic circulation issues throughout the district—from the District 3 Sidewalk Study to the Collwood Boulevard study on the eastern edge of District Three to the intersection at Pershing/Redwood/28<sup>th</sup> Street in the heart of North Park. Other planning documents we have worked on include the University Avenue Mobility Study through North Park, the Citywide Pedestrian Master Plan, and the Uptown 4<sup>th</sup>/5<sup>th</sup>/6<sup>th</sup> Avenue Corridor Study that will provide a roadmap for future projects in the district.

Sidewalks continue to be one of my top priorities- we've made a major investment in this area. In the last eight years over 1,024 locations were repaired, replaced or improved by City contractors and an additional 1,220 locations were repaired by Street Division crews. We also increased installation of pedestrian ramps to meet ADA concerns as well as to promote the general walkability for all our citizens over the past few years.

In addition, over 25.6 miles of new asphalt street repairs were completed and over 54.7 miles of slurry seal completed these last eight years. Mayor Sanders will continue to increase the street repair schedule and anticipates another 26 miles of street repairs in the next year. I look forward to this ongoing and aggressive schedule to repair our urban roadways.

Transit service also continues to be a priority for me as both a councilmember and as a member of the Metropolitan Transit System (MTS) Executive Board. Despite many challenges faced by MTS and service cuts due to loss of critical state funding, ridership continues to be on the rise, bringing in much needed revenue to the transit agency. We are moving forward with the design and environmental review of the Mid-City Rapid Bus System from SDSU to downtown, and will forward recommendations for station design from the I-15 Mid-City Bus Rapid Transit Stations Working Group, formed by SANDAG by my request.

The communities of the Third District continue to be the most vibrant parts of San Diego and its streets provide a grid to connect us to the rest of the city. Ours are historically significant communities with structures old and new and a network of urban canyons that provide a unique green space. The streets and sidewalks of our community connect all of us and I have worked hard to improve these spaces. Working with all of you, we have raised the quality of life here and I hope that this momentum continues on into the future. It has truly been an honor and privilege to serve these last eight years.





*farewell.*